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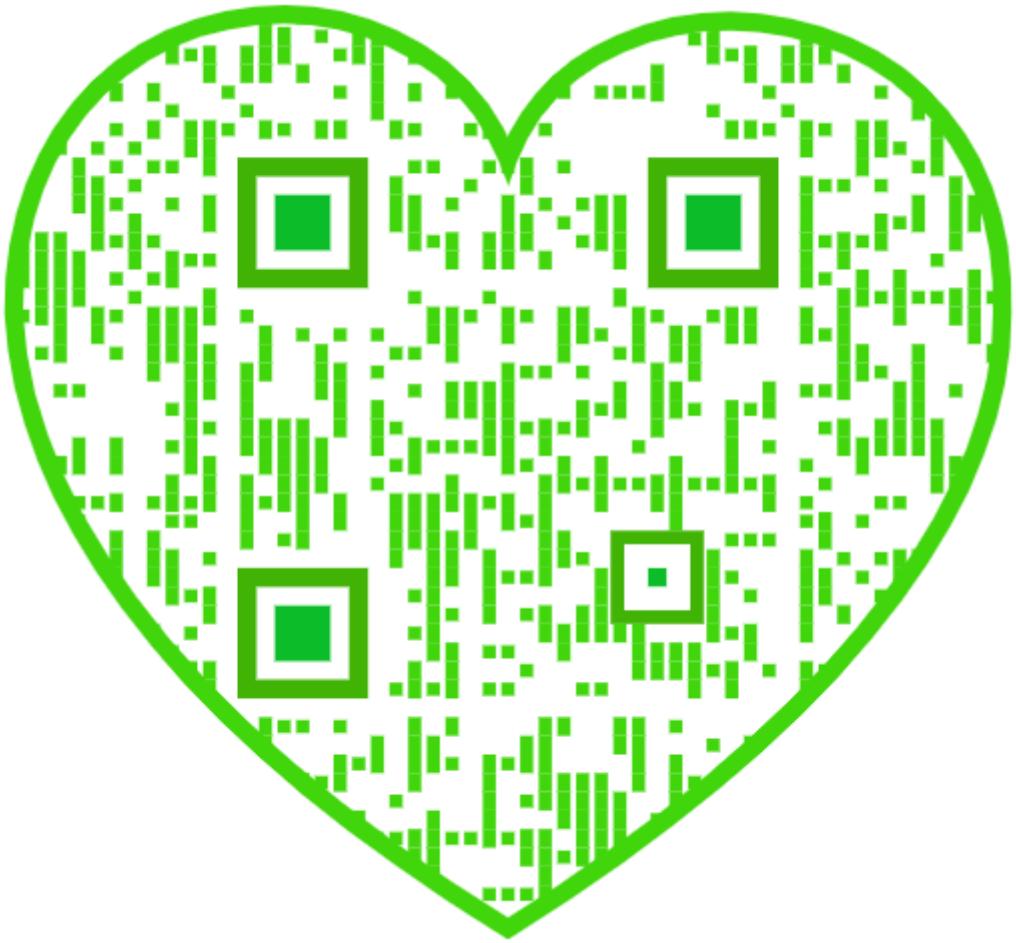

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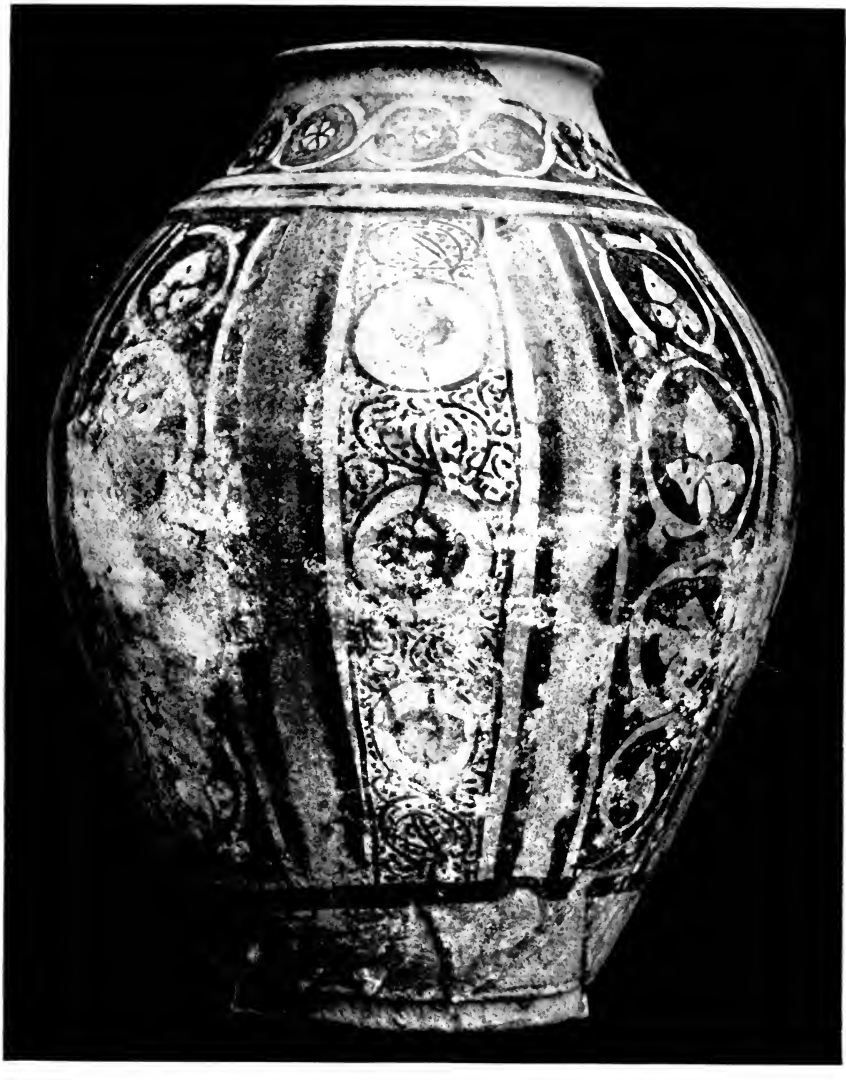
Inscriptions of the Nile Monuments

A Book of Reference for Tourists

Pottery of the Near East



Lustred Vase. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XI–XII Century.

Pottery of the Near East

By

Garrett Chatfield Pier

Author of "Inscriptions of the Nile Monuments."

With 64 Illustrations

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PREFACE

DURING the last few months, many choice and remarkably preserved examples of the ceramic wares of this section of the Orient have reached our markets, examples distinctive in material, form, and ornamentation. Among these were found certain pieces of more than usual interest, since they provide us with new facts in regard to the dating of certain of these early mediæval ceramic productions. To present these facts as concisely as possible is the purpose of this monograph, which, it may be added, deals with the Muhammedan wares of every section of the Near East, with the single exception of those of Saracenic Spain, so ably treated of by Dr. Van de Put.

G. C. P.

NEW YORK, January 25, 1909.

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CHAPTER I

MESOPOTAMIA

DATA recently furnished us through the discovery in Mesopotamia of the earliest pieces of mediæval faience prompt us here to consider first the wares of this section of the Orient, and more especially those of Rakka, one of Mesopotamia's most ancient cities.

Amidst the mounds of Rakka, which is situated on the banks of the Euphrates between Aleppo and Baghdad, there have been found of late numerous examples of a faience decorated with lustre ornamentation of a deep brownish-

purple tone. This lustred decoration, usually in the shape of floral arabesques, floriated ovals or medallions, cufic inscriptions and plain bands, is often further enriched by floral designs, ovals, or cufic inscriptions in a watery cobalt blue under the glaze. A representative example of this lustred faience is a siliceous glazed bowl (Fig. 1) which, apart from the richness of its design, has been the cause of much discussion, as it bears a date faintly incised under the glaze which, if we read it rightly, would assign it to the year 170 or 175 of the Hegira, that is to say to the year 790 or 795 of our era. The inscription runs half-way around the third band from the rim, at the end of which, at the top in the illustration, are the numerals faintly and roughly incised. Yet from other recently discovered examples similar in decoration but attribu-

FIG. 1.—Lustred Bowl. Rakka, Mesopotamia. Attributed to the XI–XII Century.

FIG. 2.—Lustred Bowl. Rakka, Mesopotamia. Attributed to the XI–XII Century. Author's Collection.

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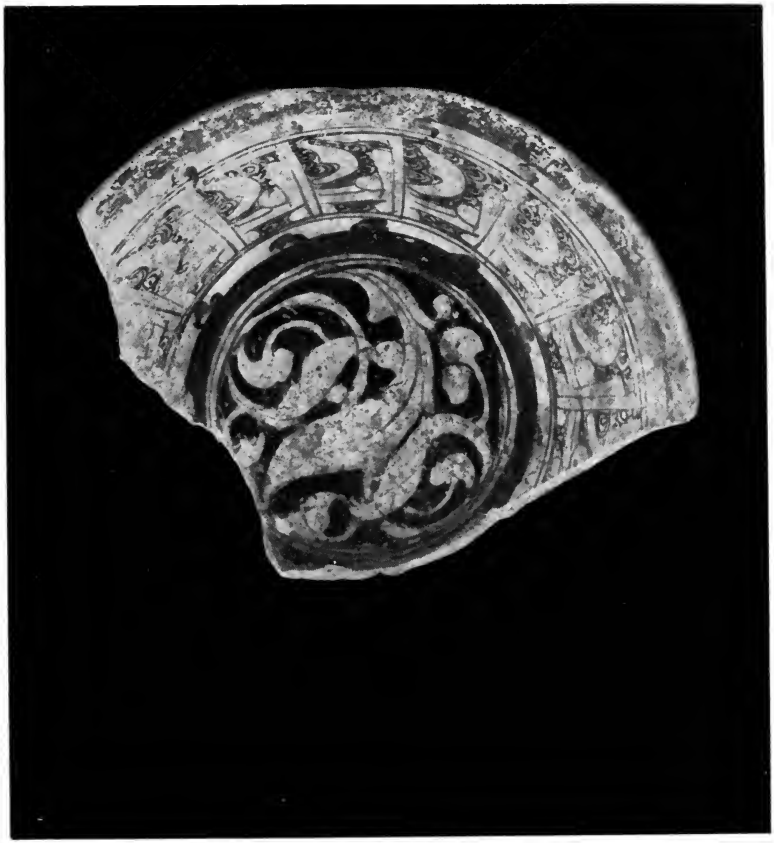

FIG. 3.—Fragment of Lustred Bowl. Rakka, Mesopotamia. Attributed to the XI–XII Century.

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table to the late eleventh or early twelfth century, such as the superb vase shown in the frontispiece, we may reasonably conclude that we are dealing with an example which bears a botched date. Until another dated example shall come to light we must hold the question of date in abeyance, with a feeling, prompted by the researches of the learned Dr. Sarré, that this class of lustre ware is attributable to the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The forms of this lustred ware are varied, but consist for the most part of deep, straight-rimmed bowls, or those of a more shallow form having, as in the illustration (Fig. 1), flat, out-flaring rims, and standing, as in all cases they do, upon an unglazed base. Large amphora and pear-shaped vases, with or without handles, deep, rounded incurving-rimmed bowls are known, as are globular or ovoid vases

with flat tight-fitting covers, and even small cups or miniature bowls.

Thus we have seen recently a two-handled amphora-shaped vase, rivalling the best Greek work for purity and grace of line, and decorated with warm purplish-brown lustred floral designs, lustred bands of simulated cufic, and floral medallions in dark blue.

The bowls illustrated under Figs. 2–3, decorated as they are with rich floral designs, ovals, and cufic inscriptions, are representative examples of this early lustre ware.

The unlustred Rakka ware is similar in paste, that is to say it is of a brownish- or greyish-white frit of heavy texture, especially so in the case of many of the large jars and vases. The forms are often similar to those found among the lustred group, though others, such as large water or wine jars and lamp stands,

FIG. 4.—Bowl. Rakka, Mesopotamia. Dated 831 A.D.

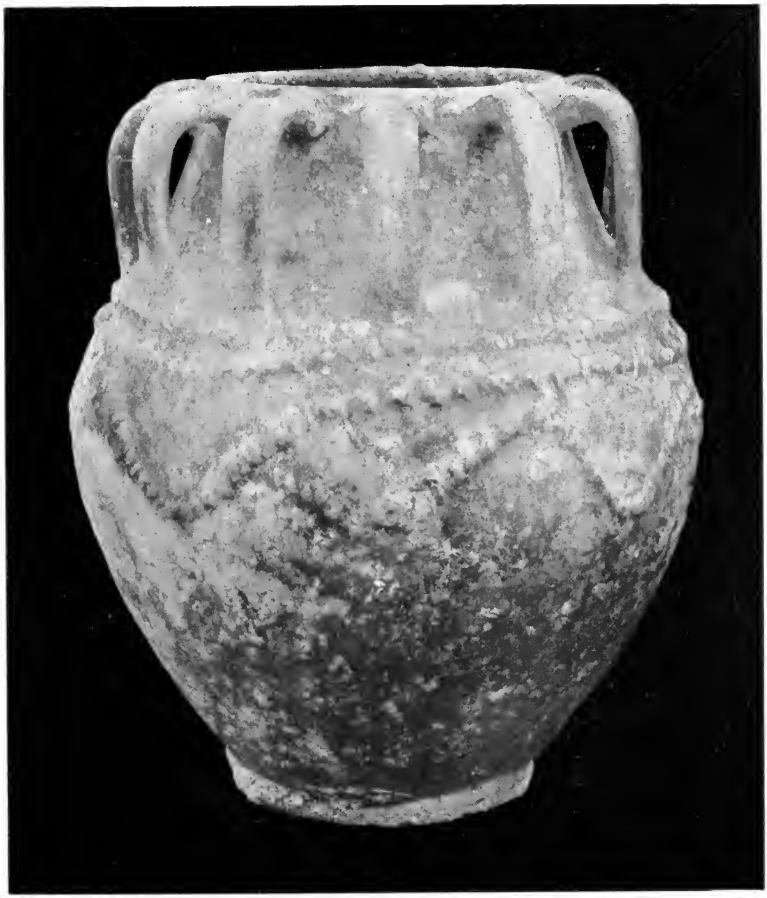

FIG. 5.—Large Jar. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XI–XII Century.
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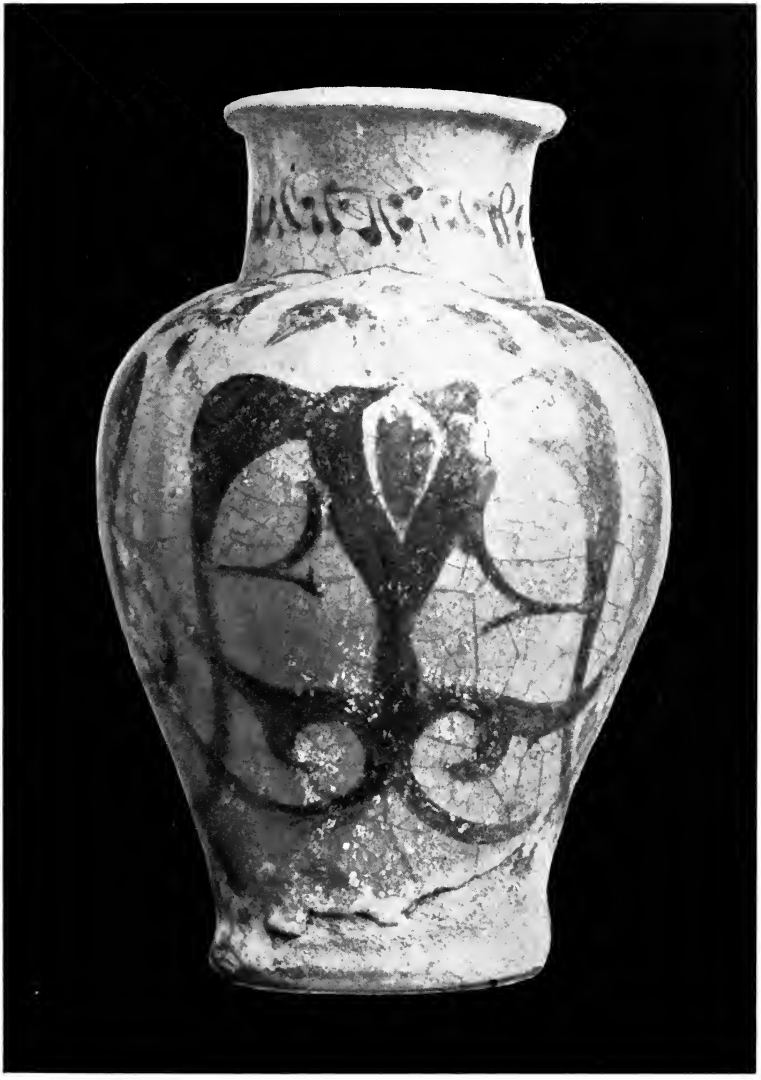

FIG. 6.—Vase. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XII–XIII Century.

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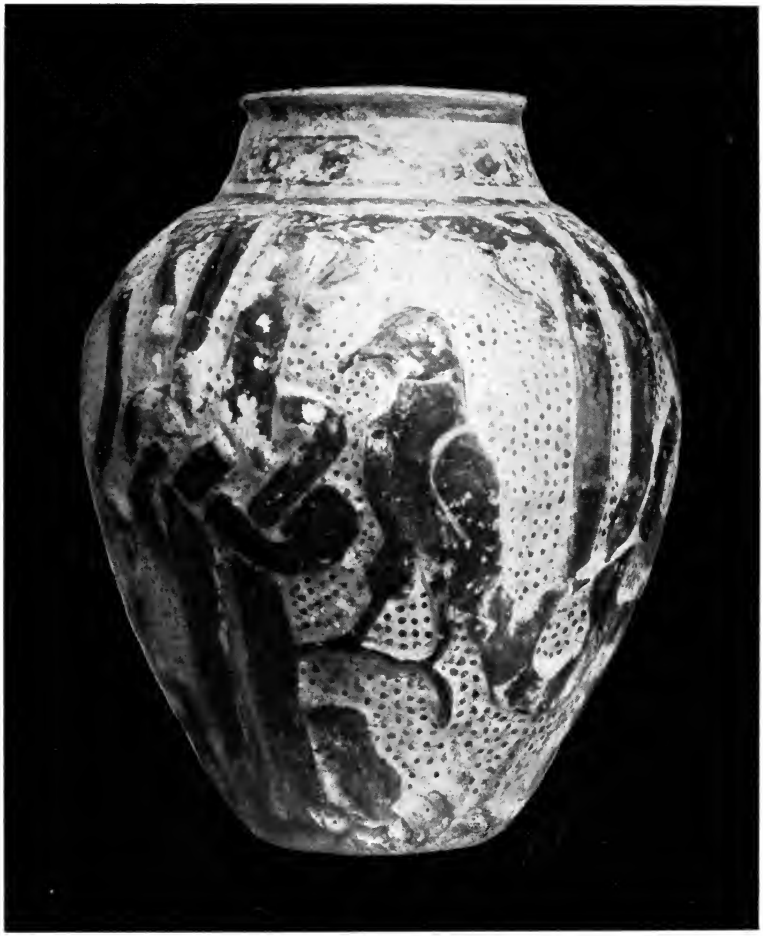

FIG. 7.—Vase. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XII Century.

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are so far new. In describing this unlustred ware, we must first mention the unique bowl illustrated under Fig. 4. The decoration, in black against a bluish green, is very simple, consisting in the first place of a central circular rosette. About this is an incised band of inscription giving us the earliest known date for this unlustred ware, that is, 211 of the Hegira or 831 of our era. Beyond this in broken compartments are cufic characters filled in with dots and lines. In this case, though the inscription is very much worn, in places entirely destroyed by the oxidisation of the glaze above it, still the date is fortunately easily decipherable, being found to the left of the lower part of the circular band, which surrounds the rosette at the centre. The decoration, as will be seen, is unlike any other example of Rakka ware, so that we may infer

that this is, up to the present, the only example of the ninth century ware of Rakka preserved to us. To a somewhat later period, to the eleventh or twelfth century, is attributable the large green vase shown under Fig. 5, while to the twelfth or early thirteenth century may be assigned the fine vase, Fig. 6, decorated in black on greenish blue, with the figure of a two-headed eagle, possibly a *renk* or coat-of-arms, and inscribed about the neck with an indecipherable inscription in black. Two superb vases, Figs. 7–8, are decorated in relief, the first with bird designs and arabesques in black on a blue ground; the second with what appears to be the floriated cufic inscription: "There is no God but He," in a blue monochrome.

With the twelfth century also the Mesopotamian potter added still another type of ceramic ware, and this in terra

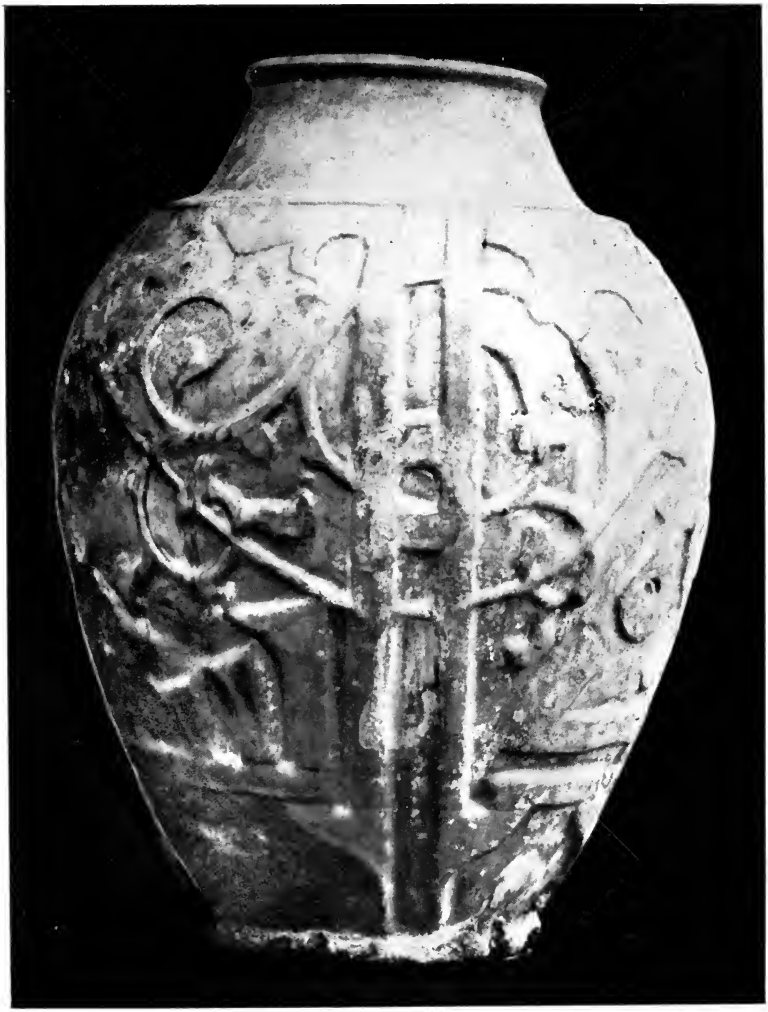

FIG. 8.—Vase. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XII Century. Kouchakji Frères.

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FIG. 9.—Ewers and Bowl. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XII–XIII Century.

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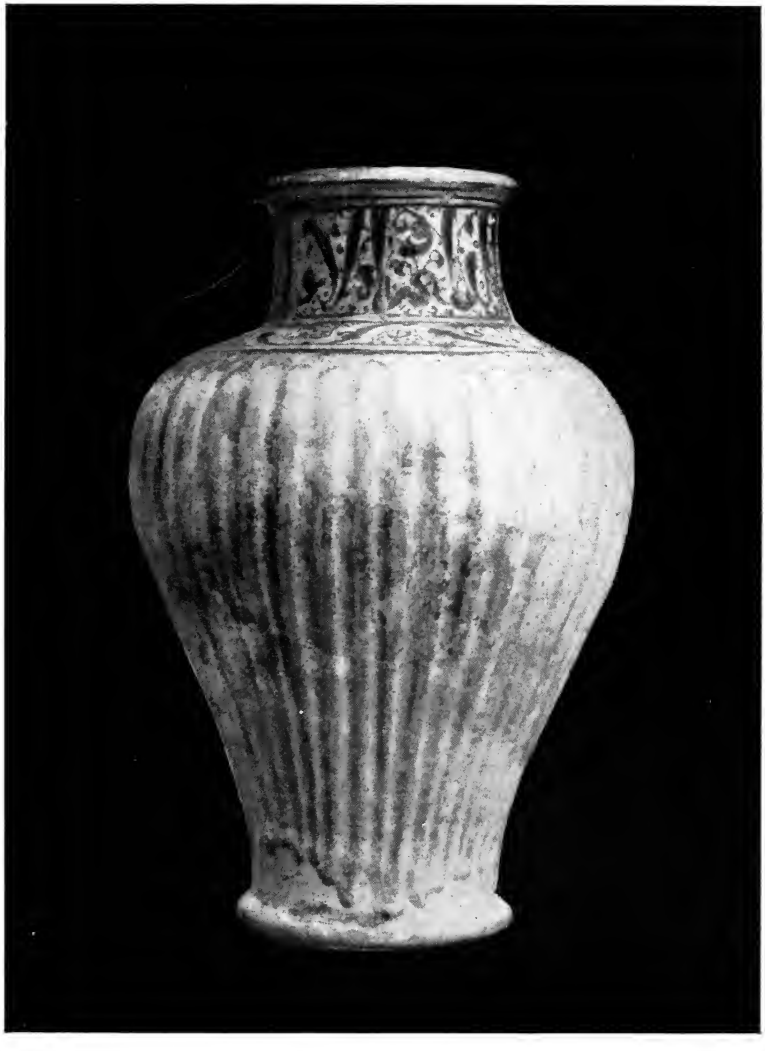

FIG. 10.—Vase. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XII–XIII Century.

FIG. 11.—Plate. Rakka, Mesopotamia. XII–XIII Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

FIG. 12.—Wall Tile. Mesopotamia. XIII Century.
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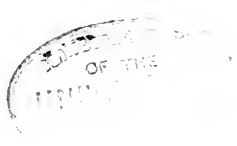

cotta. In the British Museum is preserved a fragment of a large jar, decorated in relief in Byzantine style with human and bird figures in the midst of foliated spirals. At intervals are set crowned heads and arching bands of six-petalled floral rosettes, between spirals or plain. A fragment somewhat similar is in the Louvre,[1] as is a large bowl decorated in low relief with fruit, and surrounded by an undeciphered cufic inscription, a bowl brought from Susa by the Morgan Expedition.

Yet it is to the end of this period and through the thirteenth century that we must attribute the many vases, pots, bowls, and ewers, decorated with coarse, foliated spirals, birds, ray design, arabesques, or cufic inscriptions in black against a rich blue-green ground, to-

[1] Figured by Migeon, G., *Manuel d'art musulman*, page 284.

gether with those mural tiles or plaques having relief decoration of mythological animals, coloured in the same rich tone of green, and covered with a thick translucent glaze, oxidised as a rule by the saline properties of the soil in which they have lain so long. To this period belong the examples shown in Figs. 9–12.

CHAPTER II

EGYPT

UNDER this title are grouped a number of pure Egypto-Saracenic types. The oft-quoted Nassiri Khosrau, writing in the eleventh century, expresses his surprise at seeing in Cairo all kinds of faience, including bowls, dishes, and plates, decorated with colours similar to that observed in a certain marvellous stuff called at the time *būkalemūn*, of which the colour changed according to the angle in which it was held to the light. This is certainly a reference to some sort of metallic lustre, of which the unique fragment, found amidst the Fostat (Old Cairo) mounds (Fig. 13), may be an illustration. Of a greyish-white paste, its decoration consists of a six-pointed star-

like medallion in flaming ruby lustre, filled in with small crossed lines in pale gold. This medallion divides what appear to be flowing cufic characters, of which the decoration is in part the richest ruby, in part pale gold covered with a beautiful *madre-perla* lustre. A sight of one of these brilliantly lustred pieces might well have caused the Persian traveller to record his surprise. In point of fact, and in spite of the skill presently achieved by the Persian imitators of these Saracenic-Egyptian ceramists, it is not until the time of the great Gubbio masters that one may again expect to find such rich fiery ruby lustre in ceramic decoration.

The bowls of this period are deep, outward spreading, and resting on a circular unglazed foot, seeming to perpetuate or revive a shape in common use during the latter years of the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt (Fig. 14). Their decoration is

FIG. 13.—Fragment of Lustred Dish. Fostat. Attributed to the X Century.

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generally floral in style, the design being enriched by encircling dashes of pale yellow lustre. To this period also are attributed those large vases or jars of heavy grey siliceous paste, covered with a thin yellow-brown enamel and decorated

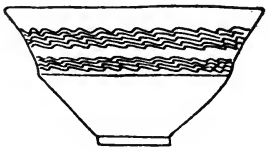

Fig. 14.—Earthenware Bowl. Egyptian, XII Dynasty.

at the centre with heart-shaped floriated designs in pallid gold, between bands of floral design, rope pattern, or, as in the case of the vase in Dr. Fouquet's collection, of twisted rope pattern and huge Nilotus fish, the latter a common object of ceramic decoration under the kings of the early Twentieth Dynasty of Pharaonic Egypt. A large fragment of a vase now preserved in the Koechlin

Collection, and figured by both Migeon[1] and Wallis,[2] is another of these lustred pieces, the decoration consisting of a splendid cufic inscription in low relief, enriched by tiny spirals picked out in white against a soft pale golden lustre.

Turning from the subject of metallic lustres we must introduce another and more mysterious ware mentioned by that observant Persian Nassiri Khosrau—mysterious, since its true provenance is still a matter of debate. Nassiri Khosrau speaks of a ware so fine and diaphanous that one's hand was visible through it when held to the exterior.

A few examples of this beautiful faience are known to-day, such as the charming ewer and fragment now preserved in the Louvre, and represented by an illustration in Migeon's *Manuel.*[3]

[1] Migeon, G., *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Sept., 1901.
[2] Wallis, H., *Persian Lustre Vases*, Fig. 3.
[3] Migeon, G., *Manuel d'art musulman*, p. 275.

FIG 15.—Fragment of Bowl. Ḳūs, Upper Egypt. XV–XVI Century.

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FIG. 16.—Bowl. Period of Ghūry, 1505 A.D. Fostat.
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FIG. 17.—Bowl Fragment. Ḳūs, Upper Egypt. XV–XVI Century.
"Made by the servant of the Illustrious Commander Shihāb el-Din 'Umary."
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According to the learned Dr. Fouquet, all such gracefully decorated translucid wares, though for the most part found in other lands, may be assigned to the period of the eleventh century and to Cairo as the city of their production. From this, the most delicate and refined production of the Cairene ceramist, we must turn to a simpler, yet equally interesting faience, which, for want of a better name, we will call "mamlūk ware." This is a coarse red earthenware, decorated with religious extracts, coarse foliation, or the titles of various mamlūk emirs, accompanied in many cases by their *renk* or coats-of-arms, incised upon the *engobe*, and covered with a rich transparent brown, yellow, green, or fawn-coloured glaze. Of this sort of pottery many examples have been discovered amidst the mounds of Old Cairo in the north, and of Ghus (Ḳus) in the south

of Egypt. The most commonly met with form is that of a deep outward-sloping bowl (Figs. 15–16), standing on rather a high, glazed or unglazed base. In date, this mamlūk ware extends over a long period, as it seemingly comes in toward the end of the reign of the Agguby Khalifs, and ends with the termination of the Dynasty of the Circassian Mamluks, or from the year 1172 to 1516 A.D. Many, on account of the armorial bearings that decorate them, may even be dated to definite reigns. Under Fig. 17, will be seen an especially interesting fragment, bearing as it does an inscription incised upon its inner rim: "Made by the servant of the Illustrious Commander, Shihāb el-Din 'Umary."

CHAPTER III

SYRO–EGYPTIAN

CERAMIC types to be considered under this dual title are wares, as the name indicates, common to both Egypt and Syria. Here again, as in the purely Egypto–Saracenic wares we have just endeavoured to group, we are first led to a consideration of metallic lustres. The examples preserved to us, consist, for the most part, of bowls exhibiting the usual twelfth-century form, having ground decoration of deep blue, turquoise or white, and rich with pale gold or coppery lustre; with floriated spiral designs of graceful style; figures of hares, birds, or floriated cufic inscriptions, surrounded either by plain or spiralated bands of lustre.

Two splendid examples exist to-day in the museums of the Louvre (Fig. 18) and Sèvres (Fig. 19). Sometimes, though rarely, another type of this early lustre ware is found, the decoration of which consists of lustred figures in circular medallions surrounded or divided by geometric designs, also in lustre. An example of this unusual type is figured by Migeon,[1] a bowl now preserved in the Mutiaux Collection.

The unlustred varieties are generally attributed to the early fourteenth century. Among them are vases, jugs, ewers, and certain shallow bowls or dishes, decorated in watery black and deep or pale cobalt, rarely turquoise, with floral and epigraphic designs. These often serve to fill V-shaped compartments that spring from a rosette or circle at the centre. In style and ornamentation, this type

[1] Migeon, G., *Manuel d'art musulman*, p. 280.

FIG. 18.—Bowl. Syro-Egyptian. XII Century. Louvre, From Migeon, "Manuel d'art musulman."

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FIG. 19.—Bowl. Syro-Egyptian. XII Century. Sèvres Museum. From Migeon, "Manuel d'art musulman."

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FIG. 20.—Shallow Bowl. Syro-Egyptian. Early XIV Century.

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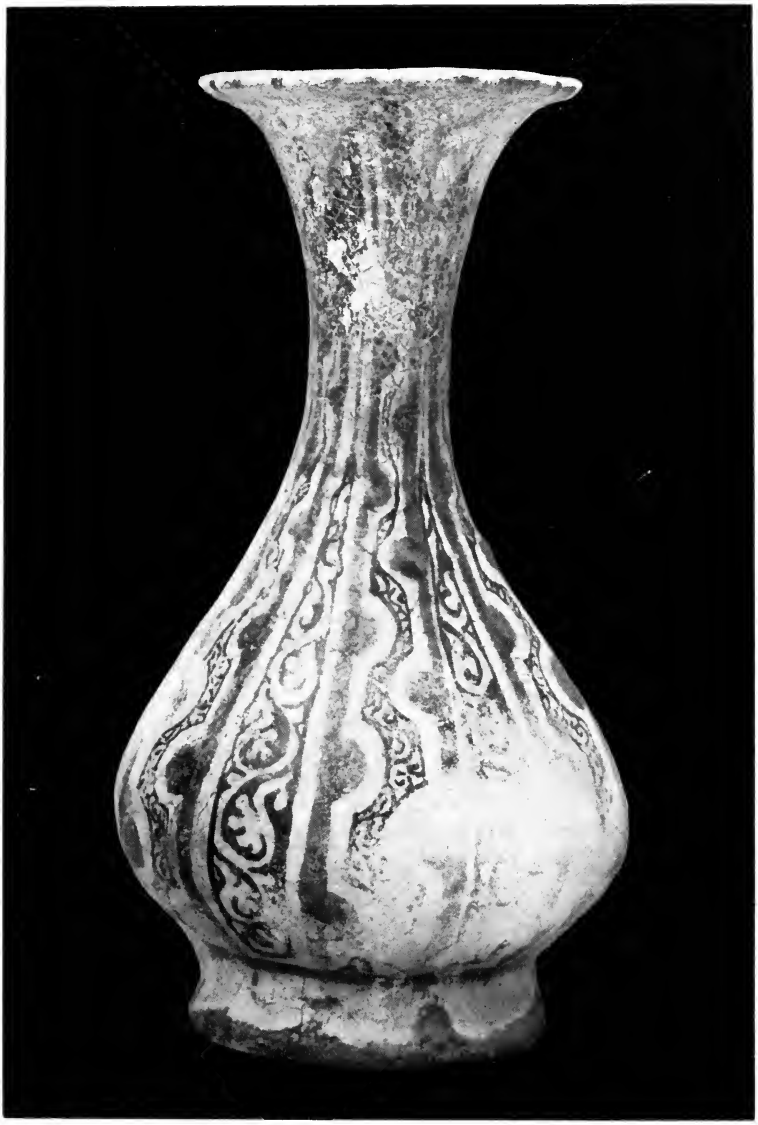

FIG. 21.—Vase. Syro-Egyptian. Early XIV Century.
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FIG. 22.—Small Bowl. Syro-Egyptian. Early XIV Century.
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FIG. 23.—Shallow Bowl. Syro-Egyptian. Early XIV Century.
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FIG. 24.—Bowl. Syro-Egyptian. Early XIV Century.
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is identical with one already considered under Egypt; but though Dr. Fouquet arrived at the conclusion[1] that the ware was made in Cairo, it was likewise manufactured near Damascus, while fragments have been found amidst the ruins of many another ancient Syrian site. Examples of this ware are illustrated under Figs. 20–24, where the forms commonly met with are shown. In all cases, the decoration is in black and blue on white.

[1] Fouquet, Dr., *Contribution á l' ètude de la cèramique orientale*, pp. 70 and following.

CHAPTER IV

SYRIA

UNDER this heading we must first consider a type of ware to which no exact provenance can be assigned, seeing that it is common to Syria, Egypt, and Sicily. Shallow dishes, plates both large and small, deep bowls on high bases, and certain pear-shaped vases or jars are the most commonly met with forms. The paste is a heavy, yellowish, argillaceous frit. The decoration is both lustred and unlustred, examples of the lustred ware being the rarer. Existing specimens consist for the most part of cups with lustre decoration against a turquoise or dark blue or black ground; but the more unusual examples are pieces such as the beautiful vase now in the Godman

Collection, a pear-shaped vase, decorated with designs of flying birds amidst flowers, bands of simulated inscriptions, and an upper band of birds, the whole in rich grey-green lustre against a blue ground. The decorative designs are sometimes floriated inscriptions as in the remarkable vase now in the collection of the Countess de Béarn, a piece in which, against a cream-white ground, are large Arabic inscriptions in floriated characters, filled in with floriated spirals, the whole in a rich olive-green lustre. This vase is likewise illustrated by Migeon, who quotes van Berchem's translation of an inscription found upon its base: "Made for Assad of Alexandria (or Alexandretta) by Yussuf at Damascus," proving conclusively that this piece is a purely Syrian production. Yet that pieces of this type were made in Egypt, we are pretty sure, since Wallis, in his *Early Persian*

Lustre Vases, mentions a vase now in South Kensington, which bears the inscription: "Our Lord, the Valiant King, Moyyad el-Mansur(?)," a Sultan of Egypt. The bowls of this class are mentioned more fully under Syro–Egyptian ware and consist, for the most part, of shallow pieces, decorated against a white ground, with designs of birds or animals amidst sparse floral ornament or richly floriated cufic inscriptions in greenish golden lustre.

The unlustred ware consists likewise of dishes, bowls, and vases, the last being the type most generally met with, though all are to-day exceedingly rare. Pieces of this sort, more especially the vases, are decorated with bands of flower-filled ovals, floriated spirals, and inscriptions in true or simulated Arabic, the whole in either black, blue or both upon a white ground or black against a greenish-blue ground. To the

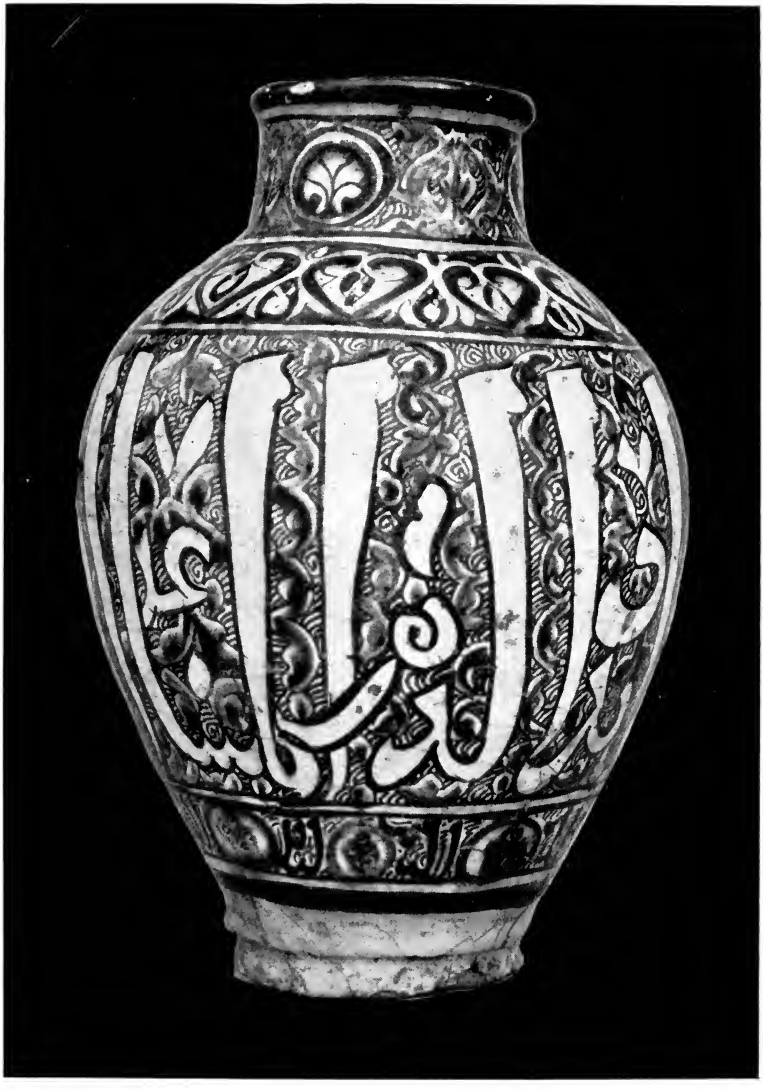

FIG. 25.—Vase. Syria. Early XIV Century.
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FIG. 26.—Bowl. Syria. XIV Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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first class belongs a splendid jar (Fig. 25) decorated in pale blue and watery black, now preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; to the second, the bowl shown under Fig. 26, and belonging to the same collection.

Fragmentary specimens have been met with on the sites of many ancient cities, for, besides many Syrian sites, pieces have been found both in the north and south of Egypt, more especially amidst the mounds at Fostāt, Eshmūnēn and Ghūs (Ḳūs), though the island of Sicily has preserved to us the greater number of intact examples. We know that at the period of the early thirteenth century, Sicily was inhabited by a vast number of the descendants of those earlier Saracens who, for five centuries or more, had wandered to her shores. So many were there, in fact, that the Emperor Frederick II. was enabled to send more

than 20,000 to colonise various fortified places which he had erected on the southern mainland of Italy. Thus we may realise that Sicily was well-nigh as thoroughly Saracenic at this period as she had been Greek under an earlier system of colonisation.

From this and other data, we shall not be far out when we attribute to pieces of this type a date not later than the early fourteenth century.

CHAPTER V

PERSIA

EXAMPLES of Persian ceramic art are more numerous and better known than are those of any other section of the Near East. Not only is the provenance of many an example known, but it often happens that an inscription worked into the decoration of many an early Persian piece furnishes us with the precise date of its manufacture. Forms, too, are better known. These, at an early date, included albarello, ovoid, or pear-shaped vases, ewers, jugs, bowls, plates, and star-shaped, cruciform, or oblong tiles and plaques.

According to their different styles of decoration, we may divide the Persian ware into three separate groups:

First.—Lustred ware, with or without colour.

Second.—Unlustred ware, monochromatic or polychromatic.

Third.—Semi-porcelain.

Taking up these groups in order, we find that lustred faience has been discovered amidst the ruins of Rhages, modern Reï, a city somewhat to the north of Teheran. Rhages was an important city as far back as the days of the Sassanian kings, and it continued as one of Persia's chief centres until the inroad of the Tartars, early in the thirteenth century. The Arabian historian, Yacout, visiting it in the year 1221 A.D., speaks of it as already in ruins, but remarks that even then its houses were decorated with "brilliantly glazed and coloured bricks." That these brilliantly glazed bricks may well have been lustred wall tiles is born out by the fact that several

FIG. 27.—Lustred Vase. Rhages, Persia. XIII Century.
From Wallis, "The Godman Collection."

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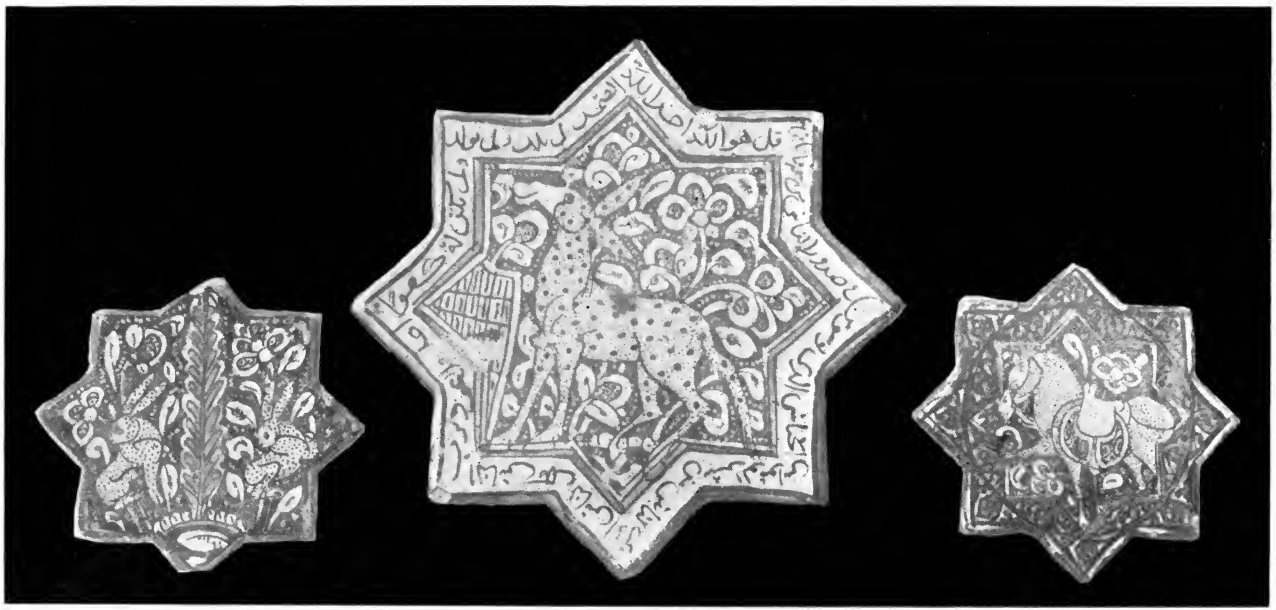

FIG. 28.—Lustred Wall Tiles. Persia. XIII Century.
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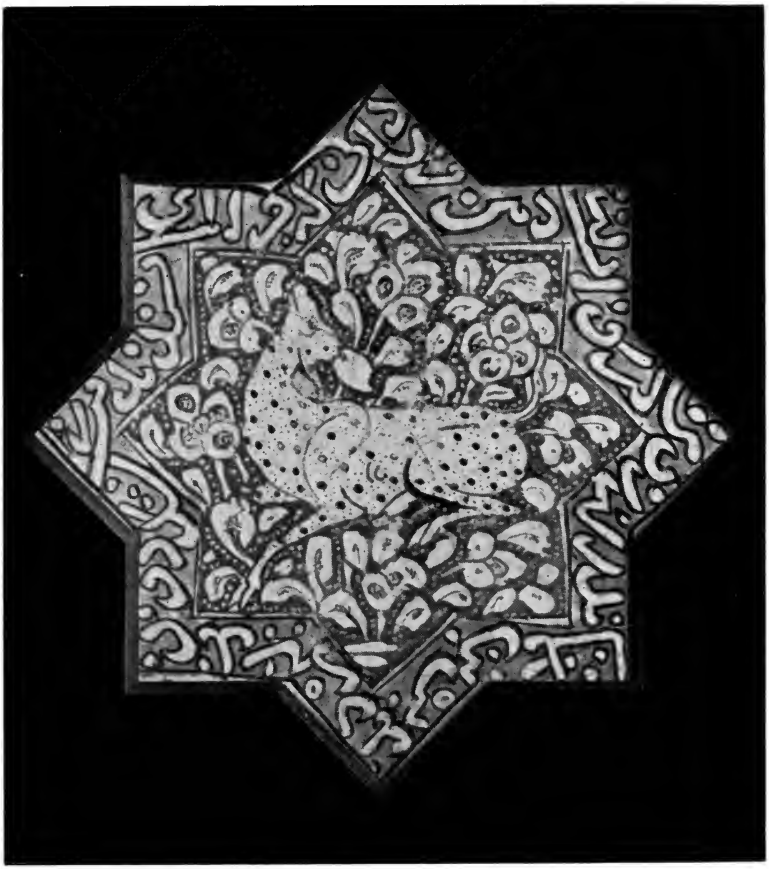


FIG. 29.—Lustred and Coloured Wall Tile. Persia. XIII Century.
Author's Collection.

Persian mural tiles are known, bearing dates as high as the year 1217 A.D. Other dated examples of lustre ware known to us include a star-shaped wall tile, now in the Metropolitan Museum, rich with blue and ruby lustred floral arabesques, bearing the date 1262 A.D., and a vase preserved in the Godman Collection which is dated 1231 A.D.

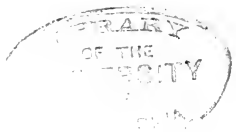
The Rhages lustre ware is well illustrated by the superb vase shown under Fig. 27, a vase rich with soft greenish lustre and forming one of the most choice examples of Persian faience in the unrivalled collection of Mr. duCane Godman. The Louvre possesses a somewhat similar example, together with an exquisite gourd-shaped bottle, decorated with foliated medallions and geometric patterns, and a flower-vase ornamented in a somewhat similar manner, but with the addition of bands of flowing Neskhy.

These examples are all illustrated by Migeon in his admirable book on Muhammedan art.[1] To this century belong certain tiles similar in decoration to those illustrated under Figs. 28–29, star-shaped tiles measuring anywhere from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. Tiles of this sort are generally decorated with either human figures, animals, or birds amidst foliage, set *dos à dos*, sometimes divided by a tall cypress tree or similar. Single figures are likewise found, surrounded by the same type of floral ornament. These designs are generally in a creamy white reserved on a pale gold or ruby lustred ground, framed in an outer band of arabesques, Koranic inscriptions of plain bands in blue or lustre. Star-shaped and cruciform tiles attributed to the commencement of the fourteenth century are decorated with floral arabesques in

[1] Migeon, G., *Manuel d'art musulman*.

FIG. 30.—Lustred Wall Tile. Veramin, Persia. XIV Century.
Author's Collection.

FIG. 31.—Lustred Wall Tile. Persia. XIV Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.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creamy white, reserved against a pale golden lustred ground, which is similarly framed in bands of lustred Koranic inscription, Fig. 30.

Tiles of this sort are said to come from a mosque at Veramin, dating from about the year 1262, yet no doubt the type was produced at other localities. Of this early period and unique in point of rarity and beauty, is a gorgeous lustred vase, dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century and now preserved in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. Of pear shape, this remarkable vase is moulded in relief with five lines of figure designs against a field of glowing lustre. In the first line we see a row of seated figures; in the second, antelope course through underbrush; the third presents a band of warriors or huntsmen afoot or on horseback, while the two lower rows show birds and antelopes amid thick foliage.

During this period and on to the fifteenth century, the lustred tiles are larger, and equally as rich. The fourteenth still makes use of the star and cruciform tile, yet early in the century adopts a new form. This is a square or oblong plaque moulded in relief with epigraphic designs, generally in blue against a ground of lustred spirals, spots and floral patterns reserved on white (Figs. 31–32).

In many cases these plaques are further enriched by friezes, also in relief (Fig. 33), ornamented in colours and lustred with figure, bird, or floral designs, or else by inscriptions in flowing Neskhy character.

To the late fifteenth, and through to the days of Shah Abbas I., belong certain slabs and star or cruciform tiles, covered as a rule with a deep-toned or pale turquoise blue enamel. The designs, either

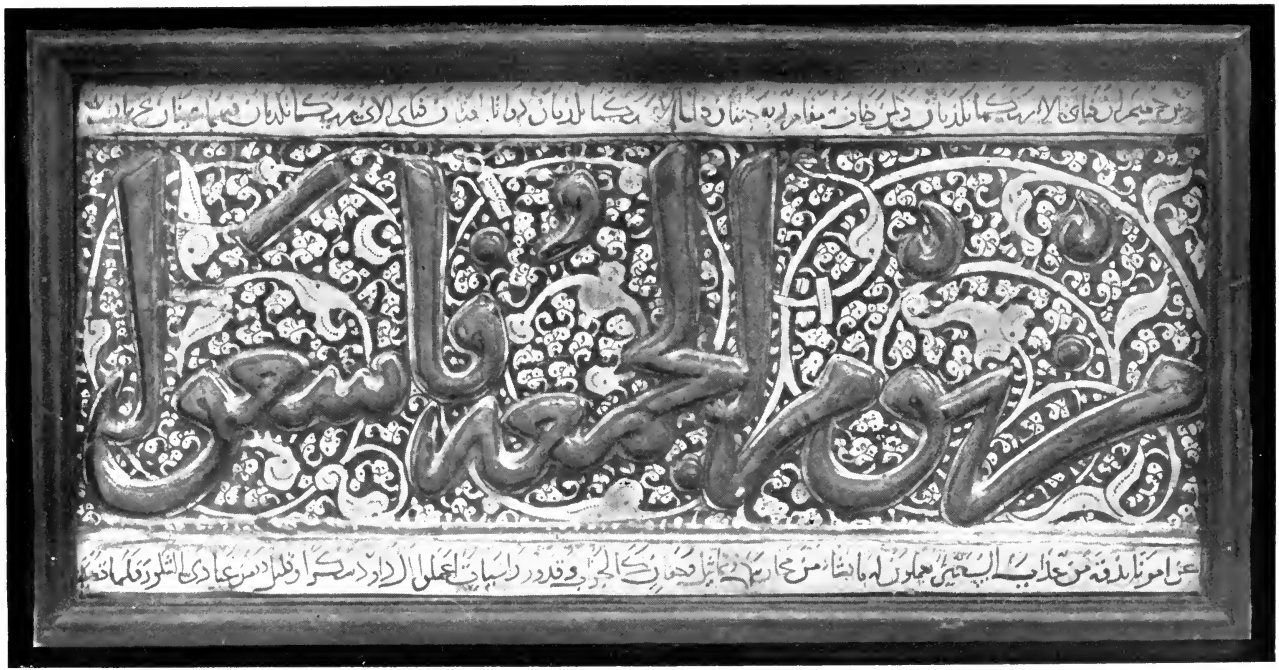

FIG. 32.—Lustred Wall Tile. Persia. XIV Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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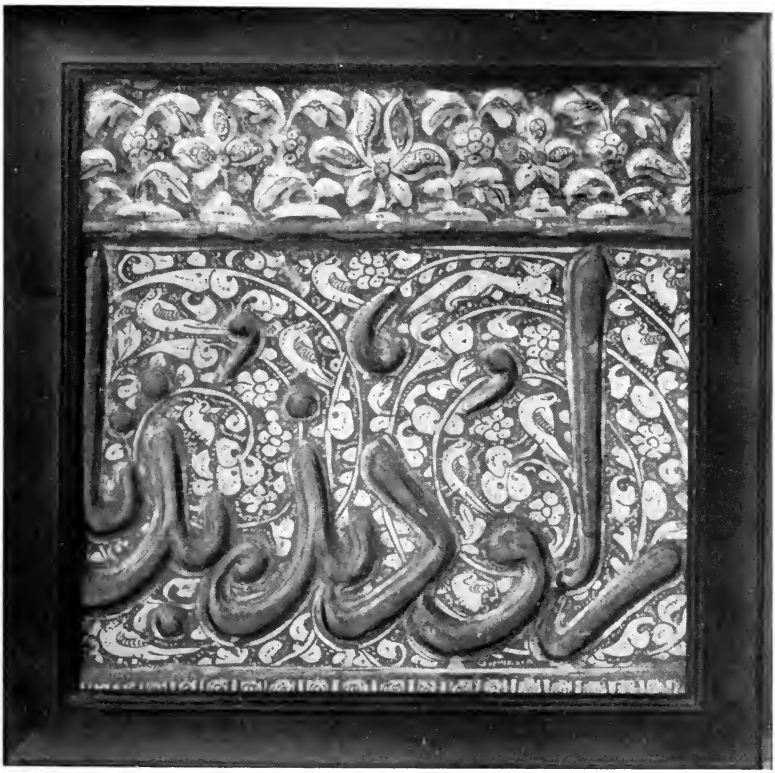

FIG. 33.—Lustred Wall Tile. Persia. XIV Century.
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flying birds or floral patterns, are generally modelled in low relief, and covered with rich gilding. In many cases, minute hooks, in white over the blue, fill up every bit of space between the main decorative subjects. The provenance of these mural slabs and tiles is at present uncertain, but Migeon mentions Tabriz,[1] though without accounting for the attribution.

With the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Persia produced a certain lustred faience, which, from the nature of its paste and the pure ivory white of its outer surface, has been called variously porcelain, semi-porcelain, or semi-faience. This semi-faience, both lustred and unlustred, we have classed by itself, under Group 3. The forms more commonly met with include slender-necked bottles, bowls, dishes, plates, small globular vases, and little cups. The decoration consists

[1] Migeon, G., *Manuel*, p. 267.

for the most part of designs after the Chinese, for we generally find the phœnix, hoopoe, and dragon worked into the usual floral scheme. These designs very likely enrich a deep blue, warm golden yellow or pale green coat spread over the surface of the piece. Rarely these designs are reserved in white against a rich ruby lustre. Examples of this lustred semi-faience are illustrated, Figs. 34–36, the first a shallow dish decorated with badly executed floral designs in soft golden lustre on a pure ivory ground; the latter, typical examples of the bottles of the period, the decoration consisting of birds amidst foliage, laid on in a deep ruby lustre on white and blue. Specimens of this lustred semi-faience may be attributed to the period of Shah Abbas I., 1585–1627 A.D.

The earliest examples of unlustred faience are attributed to the early thir-

FIG. 34.—Lustred Plate. Persia. XVI Century.
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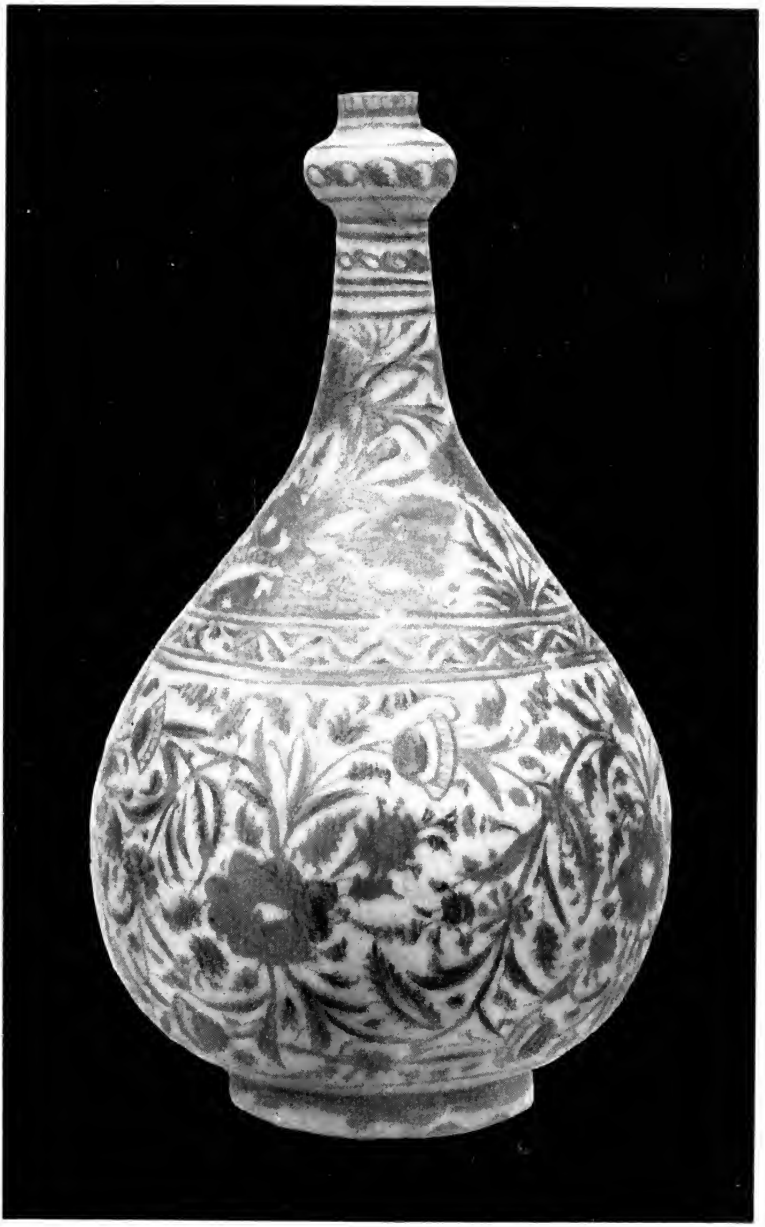

FIG. 35.—Lustred Bottle. Persia. XVI Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

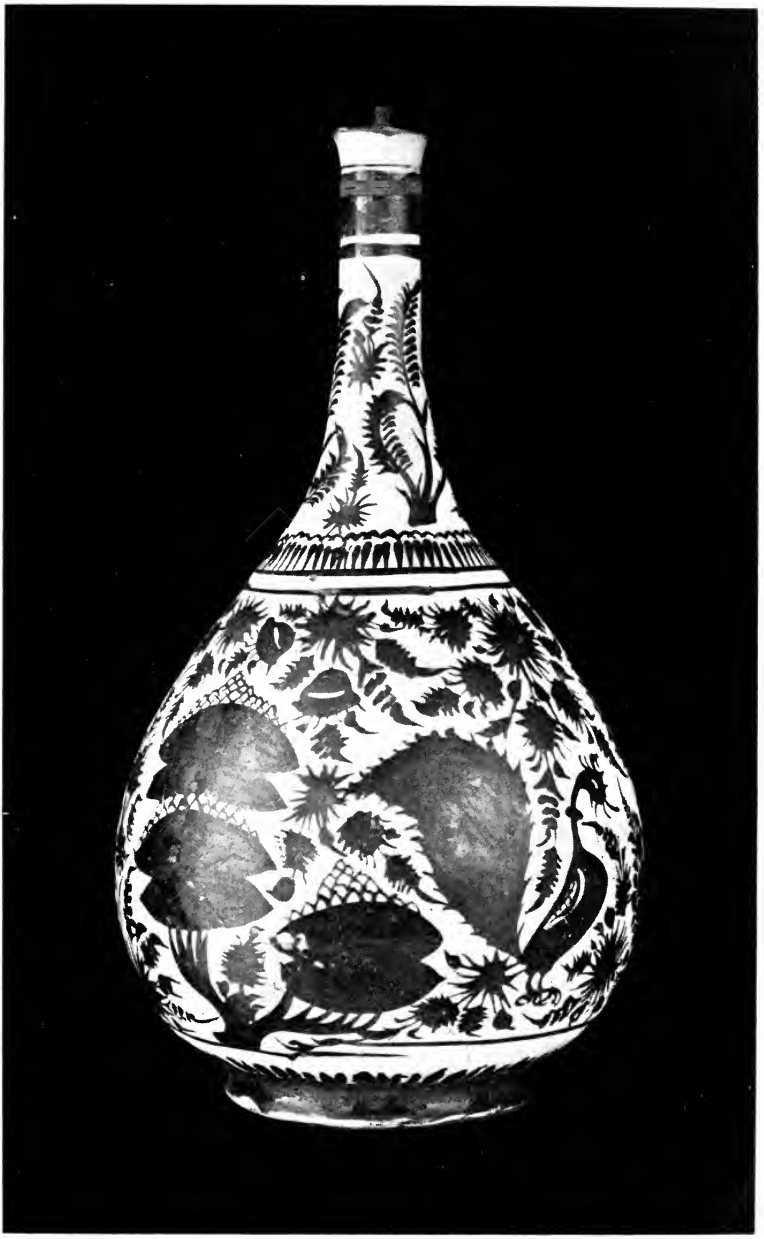

FIG. 36.—Lustred Bottle. Persia. XVI Century.
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teenth or fourteenth century. First of all we must consider a certain ware, fragments of which are to-day found amidst the ruins of Rhages. From the examples we now possess, we gather that the commonest form of this faience was a shallow, tazza-shaped bowl. The body was of a greyish-white earthenware, generally decorated with designs in blue, black, grey, and red over a greenish or yellow-white glaze. The red is of a somewhat ochreous tone, and is similar to that used by the potters of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Pharaonic Egypt. Designs consist either of men on horseback or of seated or squatting human figures, sometimes accompanied by bird or floral designs; the whole surrounded by a double or single line of flowing Koranic inscriptions. Many fragments are now in the British Museum and in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. A complete

example (Fig. 37) is a shallow bowl now preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

From the early thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth century belong many of the dark blue monochromatic pieces. Forms consist of large pear-shaped or smaller, alberello-shaped vases and ewers, sometimes moulded under the glaze, with floral designs, birds and animals or flowing inscriptions that sometimes date them. The magnificent dark blue vase in the Godman Collection (Fig. 38) is a representative example.

From the extensive ruins of Sultanieh[1] come many well preserved examples of mediæval Persian ceramic art, including vases, bowls, plates, and tiles, all of which show decoration of more than usual excellence. The greater number show distinct Mongolian influence in decoration; witness the ever-recurring phœnix,

[1] And Sultanabad?

FIG. 37.—Polychrome Bowl. Rhages, Persia. XIII Century.
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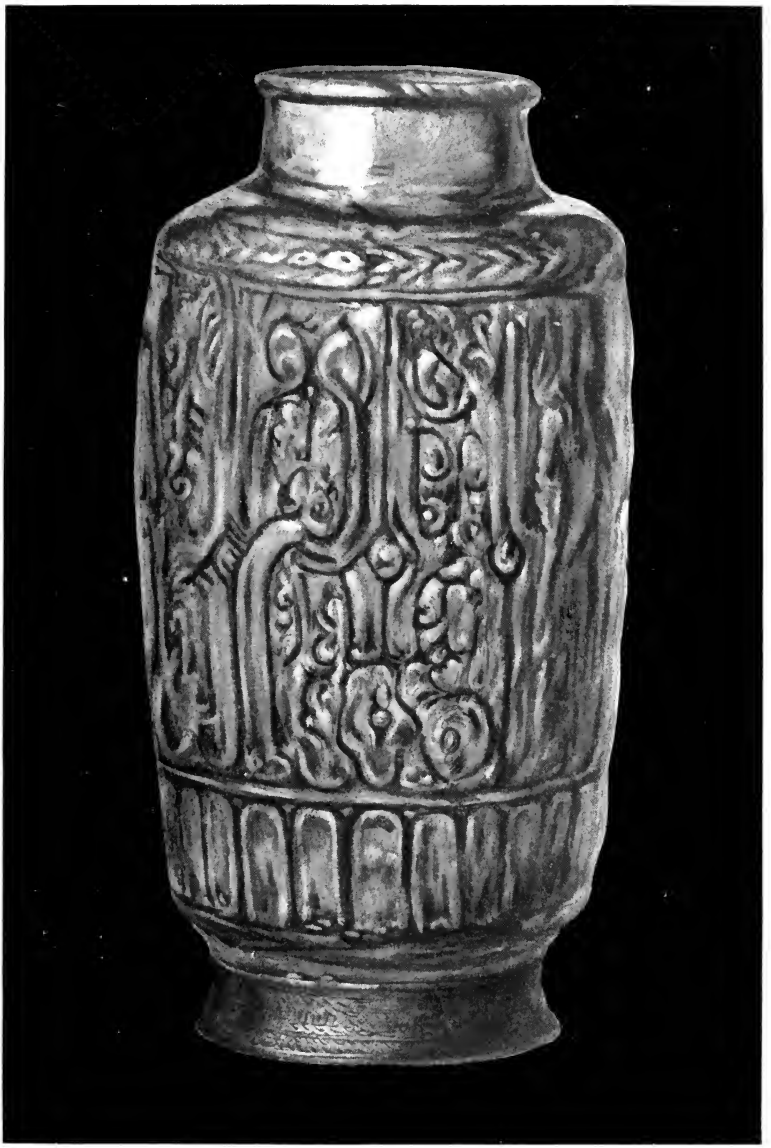

FIG. 38.—Vase. Persia. XIII Century.
From Wallis, "The Godman Collection."

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FIG. 39.—Exterior of Bowl. Sultanieh, Persia. Early XIV Century.
Kelekian Collection.

dragon, and hoopoe bird, the last a native of Mongolia. Forms are varied. Bowls having flat or rounded in-turning rims are typical. Another form is that of a low dish standing, as do the others, upon an unglazed foot, but differing in that the rim, instead of being rounded or flat and turning inward, flares outward and inclines to some slight extent upwards. A good example of this latter form is found in the collection of Claudius Côte of Paris.[1] The exteriors of the bowls (Fig. 39) are generally very similarly decorated. A line of dots and hooks framed in simple bands encircles them, while about the upper edge run bands of petal designs in low relief. The interiors, when not distinctly influenced by Chinese taste, show floriated centres, with perhaps the figure of a hare or bird. Radiant designs

[1] *Les arts*, April, 1908.

flare from this, the intervening compartments being filled with floral or arabesque designs or floriated ovals (Fig. 40). This decoration is generally framed by an upper band of petal design similar to that about the upper part of the exterior. The interior designs are likewise, as a rule, in low relief. The colours in use were a deep blue or turquoise and watery black on white. An especially beautiful form of Sultanieh ware is that in which the relief designs are in white against a watery black. In this latter class the lotus flower and hoopoe bird are frequently used, with charming effect (Fig. 41). Covering this ware is a glaze thick, bubble-filled and siliceous; the paste is reddish or yellowish grey in colour and is frequently gritty, having to the touch somewhat the feeling of fine sandstone.

The mosaic work of Persia, early learned

FIG. 40.—Bowl. Sultanieh, Persia. Early XIV Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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FIG. 41.—Bowl. Sultanieh, Persia. Early XIV Century.
Kelekian Collection.

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FIG. 42.—Wall Tiles. Sultanieh, Persia. Early XIV Century.
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from the ceramists of Khorassan, presents indescribable beauties both in line and colour. Nothing can excel the beauty of the Blue Mosque at Tabriz raised about 1437–1468. The exquisite Shrine of Khoda bende Khan at Sultanieh, erected at an even earlier date (1304–16), together with other palaces, mosques, and portals in Ispahan, in the vicinity of Merv, and farther north in Samarkand, all ornamented in the same vivid, yet harmonious manner, bespeak the Persian ceramist taste and skill. To even attempt a description of this branch of his art, volumes would be required.

Tiles of the period, Fig 42, said to come from Sultanieh, are star-shaped or oblong and of a heavy earthenware. The designs that decorate them are usually moulded in low relief, and consist for the most part of hoopoe birds or antelopes in the midst of trees or shrubs.

Colours are similar to the more useful ware, being a deep blue, black, or, rarely, turquoise on white.

Another form of decoration of this period is found upon certain bowls in which, from a central oval, depends, a radiant design filled in with flowing Neskhy inscriptions and lotus flowers in white against a dark blue ground. The octagonal or round bowls sometimes met with, having inscriptions in green against a black or dark blue ground, and attributed to Persia by Migeon, may perhaps be classed among the Syro–Egyptian ware, as fragmentary examples, hailing from Ghūs (Ḳūs) Upper Egypt, are now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The early seventeenth century brings us to the polychrome enamelled faience of the reign of Shah Abbas, 1585–1627. In the illustration (Fig. 43) will be seen

FIG. 43.—Panel of Mural Tiles. Ispahan, Persia. 1586–1628.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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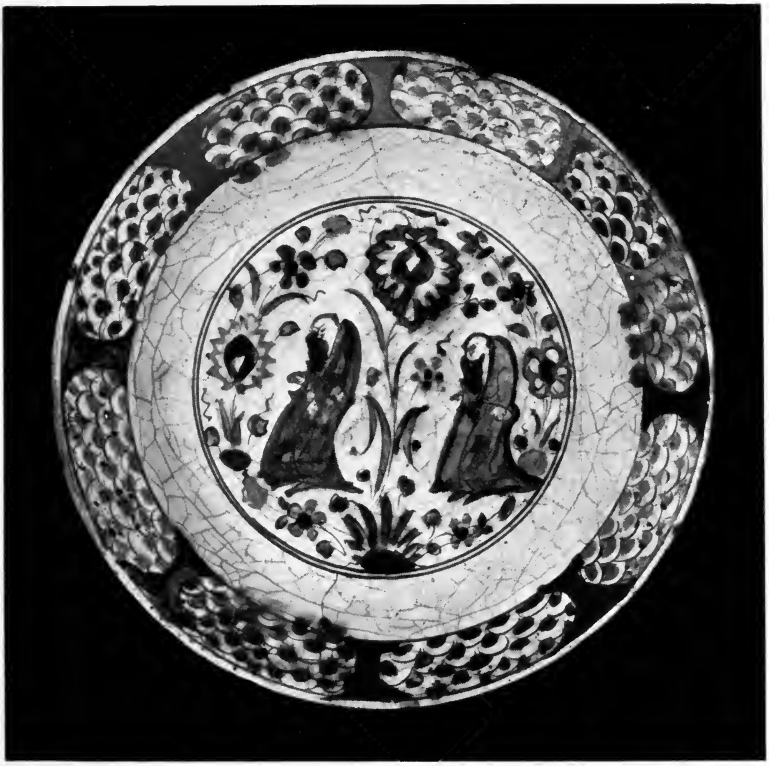

FIG. 44.—Plate. Persia. XVI–XVII Century.
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FIG. 45.—Plate. Persia. XVI–XVII Century.
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a large panel made up of many tiles and decorated in the brightest enamels, with a scene in which ladies of the Shah's Court are represented as receiving the bribes or presents of certain European merchants who would, through their influence, be enabled to reach the Shah. This panel or set of tiles is enamelled in dark blue, yellow, green, purple, red, black, and an exquisite turquoise, the whole against a pure ivory white. An interesting detail are the two long-necked bottles at the lady's feet and the small cups which both the lady and the gentleman before her hold in their hands. All are examples of the early sixteenth-century lustred semi-faience, to which we have already referred. The panel, together with similar examples preserved in both the Kensington Museum and the Louvre, formed part of the dado in the Palace of Chahal Situn which

was reared by the great Shah Abbas at Ispahan.

To the north-east of Persia[1] are generally attributed those faience plates decorated, against a crackled and often stained yellow white, with turbaned heads, birds, arabesques, or figures (Figs. 44–45) amidst flowers, and surrounded by scale-pattern and arabesque borders, the whole in watery red, yellow, blue, and green. Such pieces may be attributed to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. Another style or decoration, dating from the same period, consists of birds and foliage in black against a deep rich green. These pieces are generally termed Khubacha, we do not know for what reason. Persia possesses many mountain villages so designated, not one of which seems to claim this deep-toned faience for its own.

To Bokhara are assigned certain red

[1] And to Daghestan.

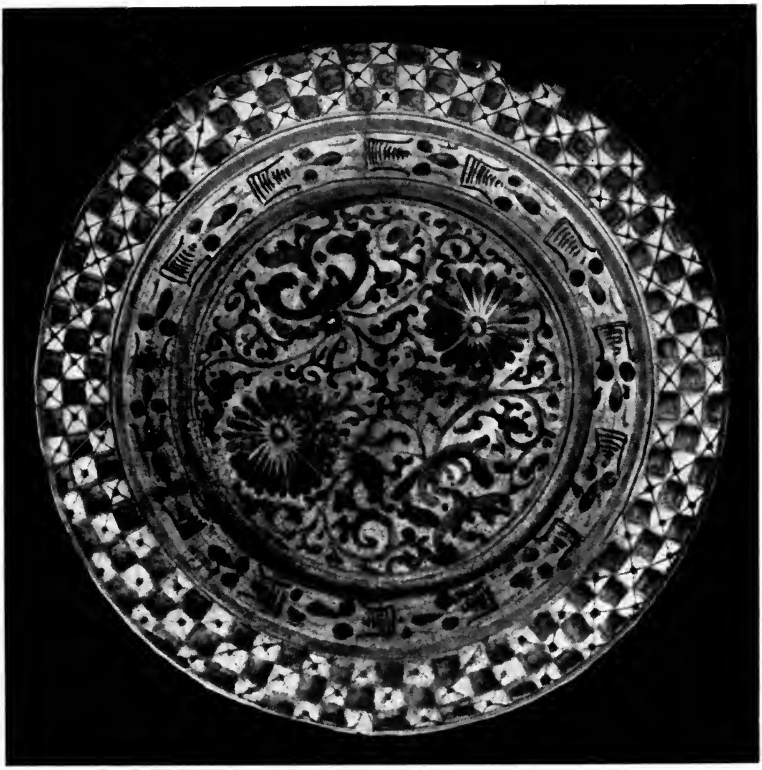

FIG. 46.—Plate. Bokhara, Central Asia. XVIII–XIX Century. Author's Collection.

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FIG. 47—Plate. Kirman. XVII Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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FIG. 48.—Plateau. Kirman (Kang-hsi type). Persia. XVII Century. Author's Collection.

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earthenware rice plates or dishes, the centres of which are generally decorated with floral designs in dark blue or purple on white, framed in a broad outer band of checker-pattern in the same colours (Fig. 46). This ware is attributable to the early eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

The unlustred faience of Kirman must also be noted. In this ware, the influence of China, introduced into Persia early in the fourteenth century, becomes most evident. The plateau and plate illustrated under Figs. 47–48 are representative, the decoration being in blue and white. The faint mark on the back imitates the square seal mark of the Chinese. A common form of this ware is the long-necked or gourd-shaped bottle, similarly decorated in grey-blue, rarely cobalt blue on white. All examples are attributed to the early seventeenth cen-

tury and many bear marks imitating the Chinese. The semi-faience of Gombrūn, attributed as it is to the first half of the eighteenth century, is one of the most beautiful of all the unlustred Persian wares. A survival perhaps of the semi-transparent Cairene ware of the eleventh century, this siliceous semi-faience is often found decorated with designs incised in the paste or with star-shaped designs cut out of the paste, after the *grain-de-riz* porcelain of China. Often we find floral designs painted under the glaze in a pale blue or watery black, while in certain rare cases the colour decoration is further enriched by a gilding laid on over the glaze. Forms are varied and include long-necked bottles (Fig. 49), bowls on short or high bases (Fig. 50), globular vases, flat dishes, and small cups.

From Kashan comes a last type of

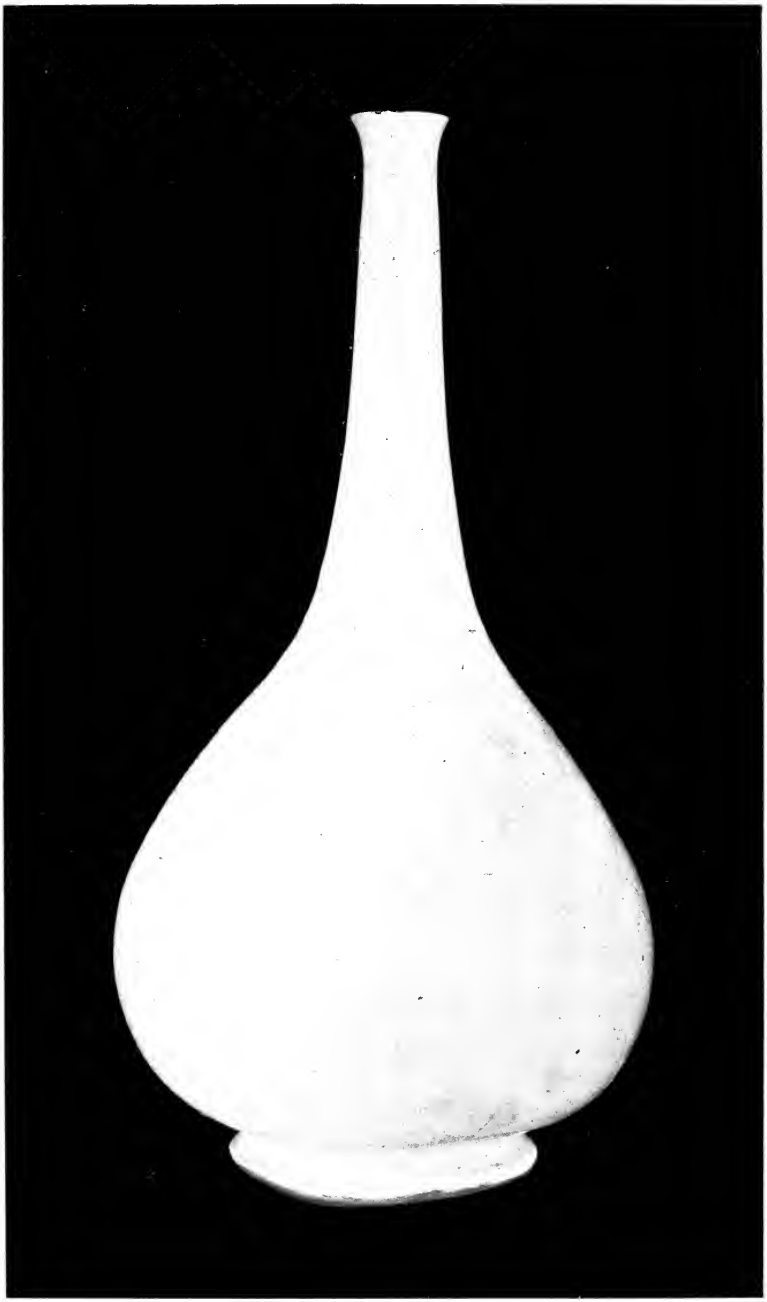

FIG. 49.—Bottle. "Gombrūn Ware." Persia. 1700–1750.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

FIG. 50.—Dish. "Gombrūn Ware." Persia. 1700–1750.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

faience decorated, as a rule, with an exceedingly rich emerald green or blue green glaze, enriched with floral designs, medallions, arabesques, or palmette ornament in black. Forms include oval jars, deep bowls, dishes, and plates. This, the last type of Persian faience, which we shall consider, may be attributed to a period as high as the early eighteenth century.

That mural decoration by means of lustred or enamelled tiles was early practised in Persia, we have already seen, but we have not touched upon another class of wall decoration whose beauties were appreciated by mediæval kings and rulers far without her borders. In many mosques throughout Asia Minor we meet with portals, mirhabs, domes, and walls, rich with a mosaic decoration exhibiting the most intricate arabesque ornament, floral scrolls, stars, and flowing

or rigidly severe epigraphic designs in the richest of enamelled colours. Turquoise blue, cobalt blue, manganese, violet, black, and white are some of the more commonly used colours. The pieces that go to make up these rich designs are composed of bits of enamelled faience cut in various forms and fixed in wet mortar. These pieces are cut into squares, diamonds, stars, or plaques, ranging in size from floral buttons, half an inch in diameter, to plaques half a foot or more in height. The beautiful mosques of the Medersa Sirtcheli and Kara Tai at Konieh in Asia Minor, both raised about the middle of the thirteenth century, were decorated throughout with such marvellous arabesque and epigraphic designs by Persian ceramists from Meshhed.

CHAPTER VI

TURKEY, EUROPEAN AND ASIATIC

THAT Turkey learned much from the wonderful achievements of the Persian ceramists, to whom we have just referred, is certain. The gorgeous Green Mosque at Brussa, finished during the first quarter of the fifteenth century, was as certainly inspired by Persia as were the mosques of the Sultan Akhmet and the Mausoleum of Murad III. at Constantinople. By the end of the century, such ceramic factories as Lindus, Nicea, Angora, Scutari, and Damascus were turning out vast quantities of a peculiarly rich siliceous glazed faience, both useful and ornamental. Their experts received commissions to decorate certain famous mosques in Constantinople. There they

have left the glorious mural panels seen to-day in the mosques above referred to and in those of many another mosque or palace throughout that city of beauty. Almost immediately, a factory in Constantinople sprang up; another, in Adrianople. Both the forms and styles of decoration used in these purely Turkish factories were necessarily influenced in a marked degree by those of their teachers in Asia Minor, for which reason it is exceedingly hard in many cases to distinguish between them.

The different decorative styles met with include floral ornament in the shape of tulips, violets, roses, and wild hyacinths; twisting vine or twigs, after the Persian, and including the Persian palmette; and lastly, the arabesque. In regard to colour materials, this Turkish ware is found either in a rich tomato red, green, and light or dark blue, or else manganese,

FIG 51.—Plate. Asia Minor. Dated 1646.
H. B. Wilson Collection.

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FIG. 52.—Plate. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
Author's Collection.

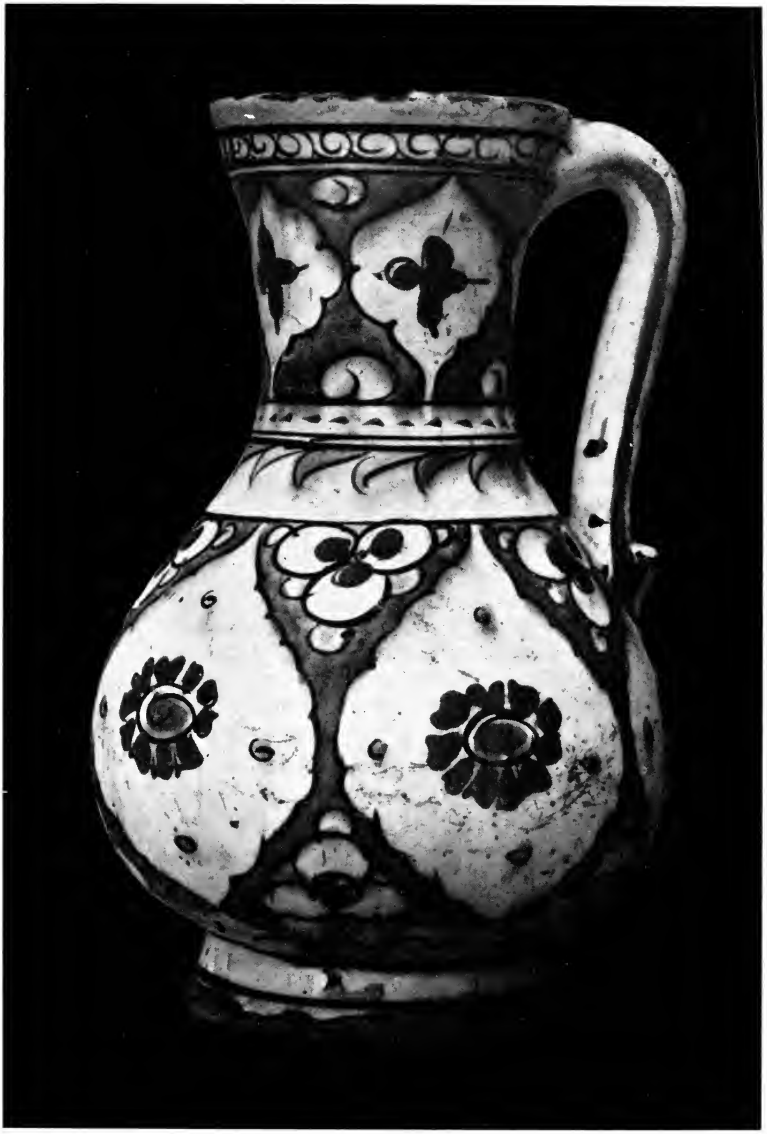

FIG. 53.—Jug. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
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FIG. 54.—Plate. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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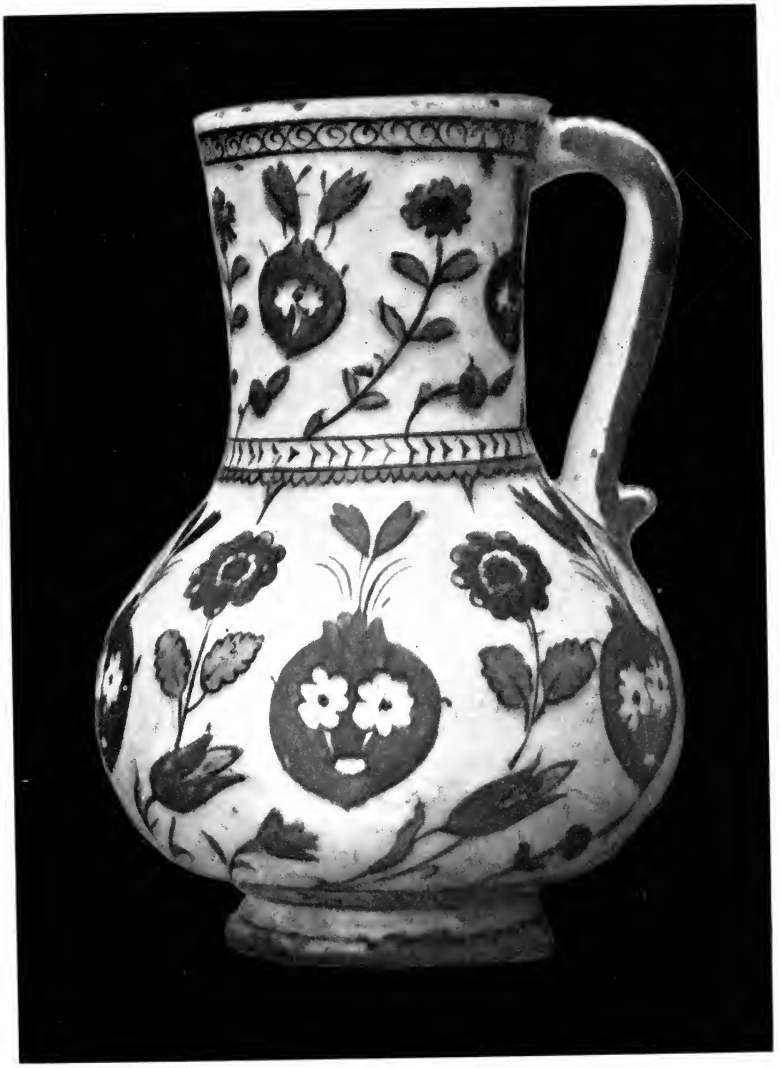

FIG. 55.—Jug. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
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FIG. 56.—Plate. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
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green, and black, on a clear white ground. Sometimes, as in one style of Damascus faience, a turquoise and deep blue is used with the richest effect on pure white. Included in the first colour group are the varied wares of Constantinople, Adrianople, Rhodes, Nicea, Scutari, and Angora.

From studies of the many dated mosques, decorated with this "Turkish faience," it has been found that the more beautiful examples date from about the reign of Suliman the Great (1520–66). Yet that this style of ware was continued well on down through the seventeenth century, we know from the dated example illustrated in Fig. 51.

Forms, beside the mural panels already alluded to, include deep bowls, large cylindrical mugs, jugs, slender-necked bottles, mosque lamps, candlesticks, and large and small plates. Nothing can sur-

pass the richness of the design and decoration of these more useful articles. This is especially true in the case of the faience of Damascus, which, from an unusual richness in design and decoration both in mural decoration and on articles of daily use, has, we think wisely, been kept in a class by itself. Examples of Turkish faience of the first group are given under Figs. 52–58, plates and jugs of the richest designs and enamels The second group includes certain styles of ware found throughout Asiatic Turkey, the provenance of which is, as a rule, Ezerum or Diarbekir, though, judging from the mosque lamp illustrated under Fig. 59, this latter group should perhaps include Persia. This remarkable piece is of a white ground covered with a coat of coarse watery black. The Koranic inscription and floriated spirals in white are reserved, and in places, as at handle

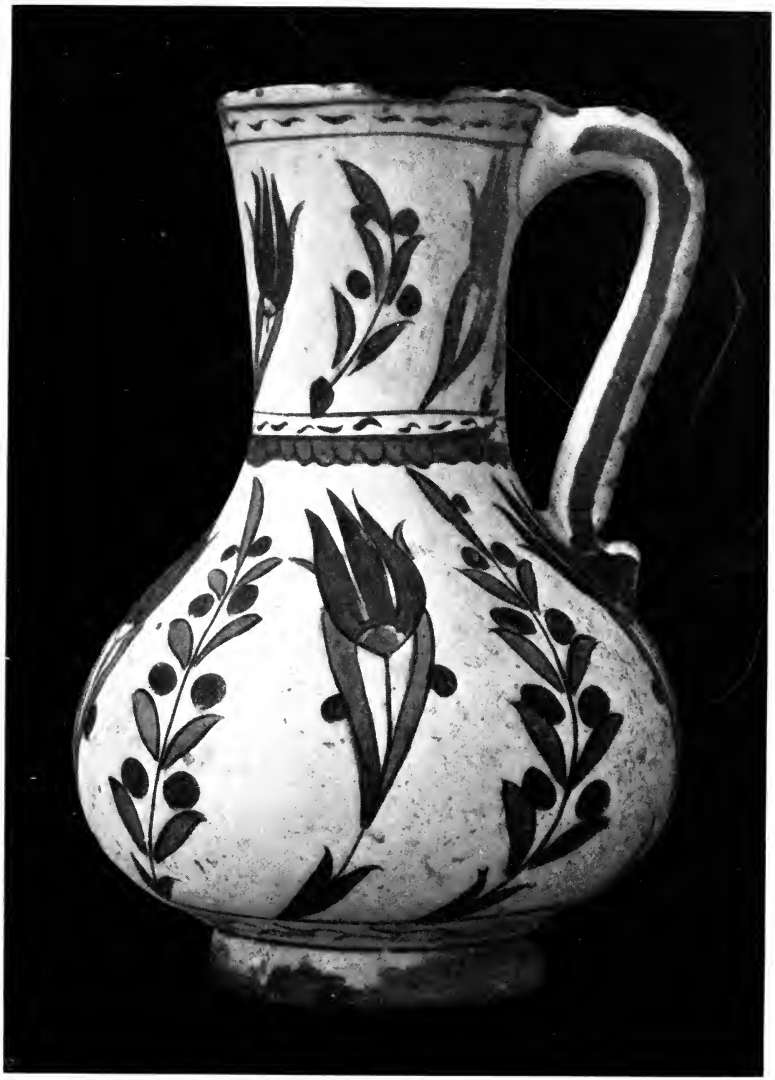

FIG. 57.—Jug. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
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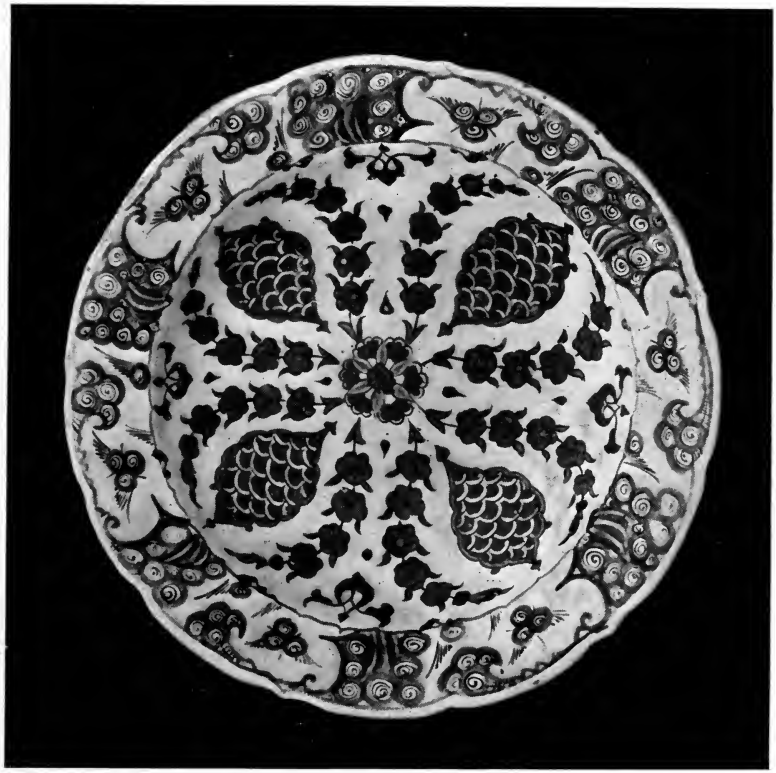

FIG. 58.—Plate. Asia Minor. XVI–XVII Century.
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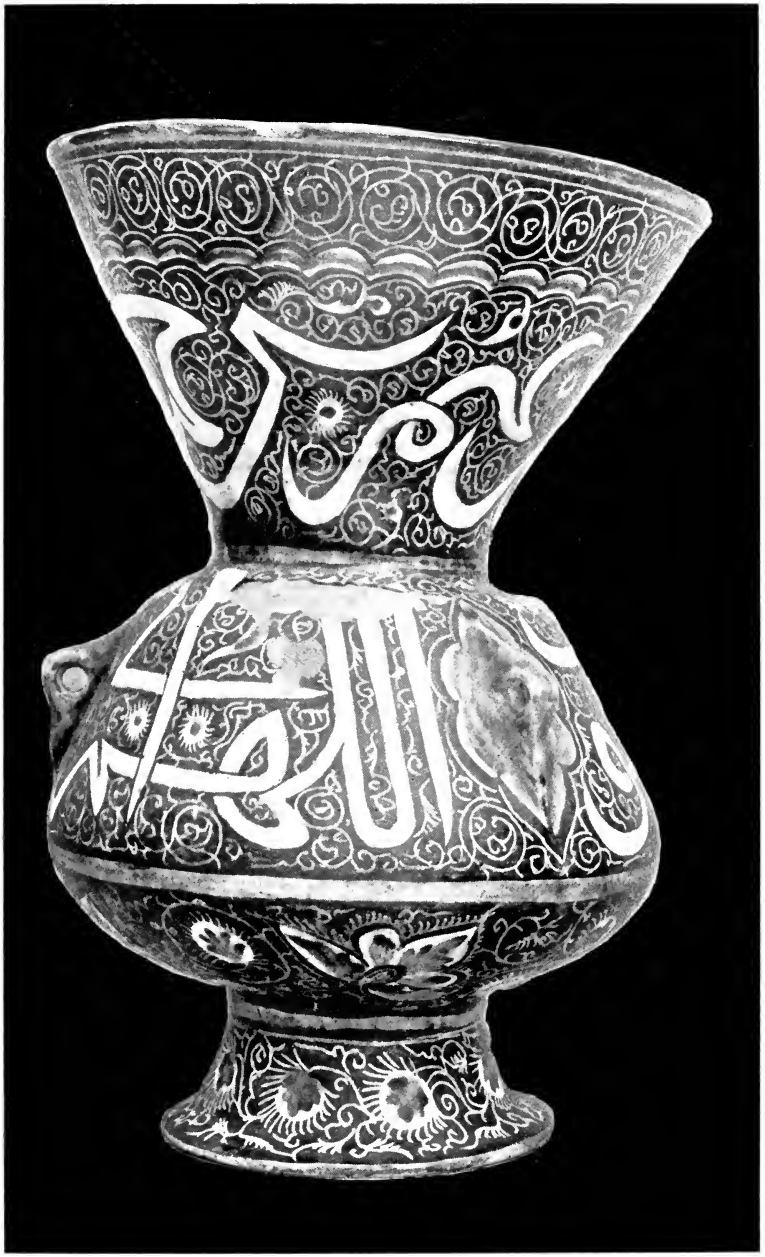

FIG. 59.—Mosque Lamp. Anatolia (Persia). XVI Century.
"Made by Ibn el-Ab . . . ? el—Taurizi.'
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FIG. 60.—Bowl. Kutahia, Anatolia. XVII Century.
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FIG. 61.—Bowl. Kutahia, Anatolia. XVII Century.
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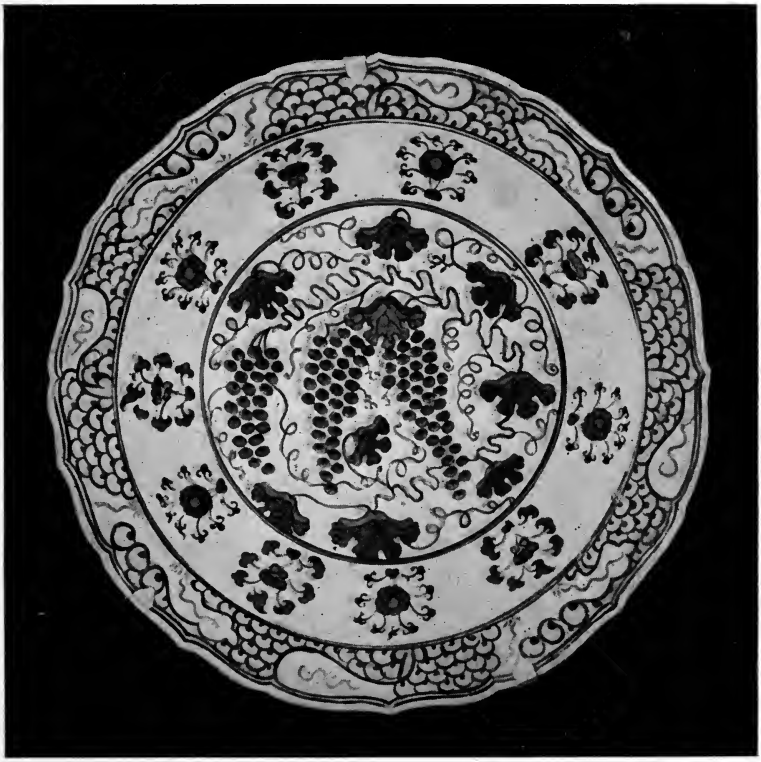

FIG. 62.—Plate. Damascus, Syria. XVI Century.
Author's Collection.

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FIG. 63.—Wall Tile. Damascus. XVI Century.
Author's Collection.

and base, covered with a coat of watery blue. The glaze is thick, siliceous, and of a pale green tone. The lamp is especially remarkable, as it bears in flowing Neskhy on the foot, "Made by Ibn el-Ab . . . ? el—Taurizi." Perhaps we may deduce from this inscription that the maker was a Persian working in a foreign land, as we know many of the Persians of this period did. This example and others similar are attributable to a period about the middle of the sixteenth century. The Anatolian factory of Kutahia was the last of the many Turkish factories, continuing as it did well on through the eighteenth century. Apart from the decoration of this ware, which is, as a rule, coarsely floral, the earliest pieces are, as a rule, of a yellowish paste and peculiar lightness in weight. Large plates, lamp pendants, sucrier, perfumed water sprinklers, covered or uncovered bowls, cups

and saucers are common. Examples showing the decorative style of this ware are illustrated under Figs. 60 and 61.

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